

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2015
2:30PM AT TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
6:00 PM AT WILBRAHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chairman Robert W. Russell (presiding); Selectmen Robert J. Boilard and Susan C. Bunnell, and Interim Town Administrator Thomas Sullivan.

Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room

Chairman Russell opened the meeting, and asked all to join the Selectmen in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTERVIEWS OF THE FINAL TOWN ADMINISTRATOR CANDIDATES

Edward Gibson

Chairman Russell explained the interview process to the candidate. He then asked Mr. Gibson to introduce himself and explain what skills he has that makes him the best candidate for Town Administrator. Mr. Gibson informed that he lives in West Springfield. He has educational degree in Accounting and a Master's in Business Administration (MBA) in Finance. Mr. Gibson highlighted his professional experience in the private and public sectors. He owned a hardware store for twenty years and worked at Aetna, a fortune 500 company, as well. He got involved in government approximately twenty years ago as a member of the West Springfield Finance Committee. When West Springfield changed its form of government, Mr. Gibson was elected the first Mayor of West Springfield. He served as Mayor for eleven years. For the past two years, Mr. Gibson has served as the Town Administrator in Beckett, Massachusetts. Overall, Mr. Gibson believes he has a unique skill set as result of his educational and professional background that deems him a good fit for the Wilbraham Town Administrator. He briefly mentioned his customer service skills; and added further comment about his experience and work in the government sector.

Selectman Bunnell asked Mr. Gibson the following question: *Similar to many communities, Wilbraham faces the challenge of providing a high level of service to residents within the constraints of taxpayer's appetite for taxes. The state's contribution to our budget is very small, which protects us from some of the vagaries of their process but leaves us on our own for financing the Town's needs. How have you demonstrated effective cost management and balancing the competing needs for service and fiscal restraint?*

Mr. Gibson responded to the question; and acknowledged that addressing competing needs is never easy. He indicated the revenue amounts that the Town of Wilbraham receives from the taxpayers and State. Mr. Gibson described his experience with cost management and balancing competing needs for services and fiscal restraint while serving in the public sector in West Springfield. He emphasized the importance of commercial growth and expansion of the related tax base. He expressed his ideas that economic development could assist in financing the Town's needs. Mr. Gibson shared his experience in implementing cost saving measures by highlighting a trash pickup program in West Springfield that he employed, which saved the City \$150,000. He pointed out that regionalization is also a method used to reduce costs to a Town. Overall, Mr. Gibson indicated that cost saving measures as well as increasing tax-based revenues are equally important.

Selectman Boilard asked: *In Wilbraham, all operating departments are direct reports to the Administrator. How do you manage, motivate and ensure that Department Heads are fully accountable for the services delivered by their departments to the customers (residents) of Wilbraham.*

Mr. Gibson spoke about using an informal and formal evaluation process to assess the services being provided by the Town Departments. He views his management style as being a coach to Department Heads and employees. He believes in working together as a team with the employees and Department Heads so as to help them and their Departments to be more efficient. He mentioned that he likes to take a back seat and see the accolades go to the Department Heads and employees when deserved. However, when things go wrong, he is willing to be upfront to assist the Departments. Mr. Gibson indicated that the one thing that attracted him to Wilbraham's Town Administrator position was that the Town has seasoned veterans in its Departments.

Chairman Russell noted that the next question would be a situational and fictional question. He asked Mr. Gibson that if: *You receive a complaint that an employee in the Assessor's Office is upset for being referred to as "Granny" by her co-workers. You discover that there is a common practice of giving nicknames to employees in that department, which seems to be rooted in a habit of assigning such nicknames by the Chair of the Board of Assessors, an elected official. What would you do?*

Mr. Gibson responded that the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen must tow the line. He stated that he would have a long conversation with the Chairman of the Board of Assessors to determine why the nickname practice started and the reasoning behind the practice. He would get an understanding of the practice. Then he would explain the detrimental nature of the practice and how it affects the Department and employees to the relevant party. He also suggested mediating a conversation between the Chairman and the Assessor's Office employees to clear the air.

Selectman Bunnell asked: *In my 24 years in Wilbraham, I've worked with only two Town Administrators, so our longevity in the position seems well above average. We also enjoy a strong organization, staffed by competent department heads and other professionals. What would your entry plan be to engage with town employees and elected/appointed officials; and how would you describe your management style?*

Mr. Gibson, again, described his management style as being a coach as opposed to a boss or manager. He acknowledged that there was a time when he did not delegate enough. He explained that he has since grown and learned to trust and delegate more. He admitted that he requires frequent updates on tasks delegated to a Department Head. Mr. Gibson stated that he would first learn the strengths and weaknesses of each Department Head. He would help the Department Heads strengthen their skill set in an area that they may have a weakness. He also talked about conducting individual Department Head meetings as well as group Department Head meetings regularly. Mr. Gibson acknowledged that he would have to learn more about Wilbraham's Department Heads, budget and Departments.

Selectman Boilard asked the following fictitious question: *A resident, who is the mother of a 10 year old girl, who plays soccer in a recreation department league, demands to see you and relays the following story: her daughter tells her that her coach does not like her, that he constantly berates her, belittles her, and makes fun of her soccer playing skills. The mother demands that the coach be fired and that she be reimbursed the registration fee for her daughter. What is your reply to the mother, and what action do you take?*

Mr. Gibson would inquire if the mother of the child discussed the problem with the Parks and Recreation Department Director first. If not, he would encourage the parent to address the issue with the Director first. If she had already discussed the matter with the Director, then he would investigate the situation. He would also review historical information to see if any similar incidents occurred in the past involving the same coach. If the claims are true, Mr. Gibson recognized that this is a serious situation and the coach should probably not coach anymore.

Chairman Russell asked: *Currently the Town is heading into its budget season. One of the major tasks the Town Administrator does, in collaboration with the Finance Committee, is put together the Annual Town Budget. What is your philosophy to develop an annual budget based on your experience working in a small town and small city?*

Mr. Gibson explained his experience in developing a budget, which entailed working with Department Heads and their wish lists. He reviews several fiscal options before moving forward with a budget. He explained that he sits down with each Department Head and goes through the budget with them. Mr. Gibson would ask the Department Heads to itemize their line items in the budget. Then, Mr. Gibson would prioritize expenses and review the budget in comparison to last year's budget. He would also consider the anticipated, increased expenses, such as health insurance, etcetera. He would also consider what the Board of Selectmen's and Finance Committee's fiscal priorities are for the annual budget. He spoke about the State's effect on local budgets and provided an example of the regional school transportation monies and how it impacts a Town's budget.

Selectman Bunnell asked: *Education and schools are very important to Wilbraham and our regional partner the Town of Hampden. Please describe any previous experience interacting with School Committees and/or Superintendents, and explain how that would translate to our Regional School District's circumstance.*

Mr. Gibson highlighted his experience in West Springfield. He mentioned that he sat on the West Springfield School Committee. He recognized that there is a difference between West Springfield's School System and a regional school system. He discussed his knowledge of how Town employees, the School Committee and Superintendent of Schools interact. He also acknowledged his understanding that it's easier to implement constraints when a school system is under the Town's control unlike a regional school system. He shared his experience with the regional school system in Becket. He mentioned that he still does not fully understand the assessment side of the regional school system's process. However, he has experience with dealing with how a reduction or increase in a regional school system's assessment impacts a community's annual budget.

Selectman Bunnell asked a follow up question: *A particular concern in Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School System is the impact of the sharply decline in enrollment; and the challenges presented to expand the regional school system with a middle school. Can you describe your experience that would demonstrate a similar challenge and describe a resolution for us?*

Mr. Gibson explained that there is a similar situation in Central Berkshire Regional School System. He mentioned that another contributing factor to such challenges in the Berkshires is the lack of high speed Internet technology. He shared that the regional school system in Becket just voted to eliminate a middle school. Additionally, there are other middle schools in that system, which may have to close as well. He explained his experience with this similar challenge in his role as a Town Administrator in Beckett. He discussed a number of hypothesized solutions, including redistricting, to address this mounting issue.

Selectman Boilard asked another fictitious question: *The Police Chief is also the brother of one of the Police Captains. There is a vacancy for a new patrol officer, and the son of the Police Captain, who is the Chief's brother, is an applicant for the position. What are you concerned about? What action would you take?*

Mr. Gibson identified the concern as nepotism. He suggested that the Police Chief and Captain step outside of the hiring process. He discussed the hiring process by using examples from his own experience in West Springfield. He explained how he would make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen relative to the hiring process. Mr. Gibson also mentioned that he would probably have one of the surrounding communities' police departments undertake the background checks and be included in the interview process.

Chairman Russell informed that the interview had concluded and thanked Mr. Gibson for his participation. He then announced to the audience that the candidates will continue the interview process at 6:00pm at the Wilbraham Public Library's Brooks Room, where the candidates will participate in a "meet and greet" session, which is open to the public. Before closing the interview session, Chairman Russell offered Mr. Gibson the opportunity to ask a question or make a last statement.

Mr. Gibson asked the Selectmen what they would like to see as a quality in the next Town Administrator. Selectman Boilard stated a sense of humor and conservative approach to the budget and collective bargaining process. Discussion commenced between the Selectmen and Mr. Gibson about his experience with the budget process and school committees.

Selectman Bunnell informed that the Town of Wilbraham is facing a number of Department Heads retiring in the near future. She acknowledged that the Town has a great second team as well; however, the team needs to be built up to prepare for the significant changes ahead. Chairman Russell shared that Mr. Gibson relieved his fears that he would be a Chief Executive Officer and not a Chief Operating Officer. He mentioned that the input a Town Administrator provides is valuable; and explained why. Chairman Russell commended Mr. Gibson for having a mix of business/municipal experience and skill set. He thanked Mr. Gibson for going through the Town Administrator candidate/interview process.

Nick Breault

Chairman Russell explained the interview process to the candidate. He also informed that the Selectmen would greet Mr. Breault later today at the Wilbraham Public Library's Brooks Room, where he would get to meet the community. Chairman Russell then asked Mr. Breault to introduce himself; and explain what skills he has that makes him the best candidate for Town Administrator.

Mr. Breault thanked the Selectmen for allowing him to get this far in the process. He explained that he is currently the Town Administrator in East Longmeadow, which he has been for the past ten years. Mr. Breault informed, that prior to his current position, he worked as a Mayoral Aide in the City of Springfield for five and half years under two mayoral administrations. He shared that he has a lot of work experience rooted in constituent work and addressing citizens' needs. As a Town Administrator, Mr. Breault focuses on the citizens, who are being served. He shared that he has a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Massachusetts. He described his financial skills and experience in his role as Town Administrator in East Longmeadow, which included various responsibilities, such as Chief Procurement Officer, etcetera.

Chairman Russell asked a follow up question: *Why would you want to move from a sister Town across the line?*

Mr. Breault stated that his desire to move to Wilbraham has nothing to do with a burning desire to leave his position in the Town of East Longmeadow. He clarified that he is not trying to escape anything. Mr. Breault explained that his decision is based on career progression. According to Mr. Breault, the Town Administrator position in Wilbraham is a stronger position

than the position in East Longmeadow. He considers himself at midlevel in his career as a Town Administrator; and wants to further his career advancement. The Town Administrator position in Wilbraham is an opportunity for career advancement.

Selectman Bunnell asked Mr. Breault the following question: *Similar to many communities, Wilbraham faces the challenge of providing a high level of service to residents within the constraints of taxpayer's appetite for taxes. The state's contribution to our budget is very small, which protects us from some of the vagaries of their process but leaves us on our own for financing the Town's needs. How have you demonstrated effective cost management and balancing the competing needs for service and fiscal restraint?*

Mr. Breault stated that you have to look at what you can afford and find ways to identify cost savings. He highlighted how he is attempting to reduce health insurance costs for the Town of East Longmeadow through the collective bargaining process. Mr. Breault further added that as a Town Administrator, you must examine all measures to ensure that the Town is in alignment with fees and pinpoint any inefficiencies and, or efficiencies. He provided a variety of options to be utilized to examine and identify cost savings. Mr. Breault emphasized that this fiscal management practice occurs consistently whether or not the Town is experiencing fiscal good or bad times. Overall, he accentuated that a Town should be an efficient operation.

Selectman Boilard asked: *In Wilbraham all operating departments are direct reports to the Administrator. How do you manage, motivate and ensure that Department Heads are fully accountable for the services delivered by their departments.*

Mr. Breault stated that it starts with communication and what the expectation is for Department Heads and the Departments. He indicated that developing goals is key; and ensuring that those goals fit in with the overall mission of the Town's government. He explained that developing performance measurement to evaluate such goals, and holding people accountable, is critical for success. He further clarified his thinking in this area. He emphasized that there should be a two-way communication between the Town Administrator and Department Heads.

Chairman Russell asked Mr. Breault if: *You receive a complaint that an employee in the Assessor's Office is upset for being referred to as "Granny" by her co-workers. You discover that there is a common practice of giving nicknames to employees in that department, which seems to be rooted in a habit of assigning such nicknames by the Chair of the Board of Assessors, an elected official. What would you do?*

Mr. Breault indicated that he would initially verify with the Human Resource Department if the Chairman signed off on a policy that does not condone that type of activity. If the Chairman has not, Mr. Breault would remedy that lapse immediately in private with the Chairman. He would conduct an investigation into the situation, (or delegate it to the appropriate person as organizational procedure directs,) whereas the complaint is a type of claim involving harassment. Mr. Breault acknowledged that he has dealt with similar circumstances in East Longmeadow before, which he dealt with according to the policy that was set in place.

Selectman Bunnell asked: *In my 24 years in Wilbraham, I've worked with only two Town Administrators, so our longevity in the position seems well above average. We also enjoy a strong organization, staffed by competent department heads and other professionals. What would your entry plan be to engage with town employees and elected/appointed officials and how would you describe your management style?*

Mr. Breault responded that he would engage one-on-one with each Department Head. He described that in the first few days or weeks, he would have frequent meetings with each Department Head to assess the needs and priorities of the Department as well as gain a greater understanding of the Departments' institutional history. Mr. Breault acknowledged that this activity would be an ongoing process. Additionally, he would meet with elected officials and attend various committee meetings to get a sense as to where the Town Committees are. He described his management style as democratic and facilitative.

Selectman Boilard asked: *A resident, who is the mother of a 10 year old girl, who plays soccer in a recreation department league, demands to see you and relays the following story: her daughter tells her that her coach does not like her, that he constantly berates her, belittles her, and makes fun of her soccer playing skills. The mother demands that the coach be fired and that she be reimbursed the registration fee for her daughter. What is your reply to the mother, and what action do you take?*

Mr. Breault acknowledged that parents can be passionate about their kids playing sports. He stated that he would meet with the parent and hear her side of the story. At the same time, he would inform the Director of Parks and Recreation Department about the situation; and direct the Director to inform the Park and Recreation Department's Board of the circumstance. Mr. Breault would conduct an investigation into the incident. First, it is important to get a sense as to how serious the situation is

from the parent. If he discovered elements in the incident that require a response, he would make recommendations accordingly. Mr. Breault would look to bring the parties together to determine a hypothetical action to resolve the matter.

Chairman Russell pointed out that earlier in the interview, Mr. Breault mentioned that he had a role in the Annual Budget in East Longmeadow but not a global role. Chairman Russell asked Mr. Breault: *to elaborate on that earlier comment and explain the difference between the Town Administrator's roles in the budget process in East Longmeadow as opposed to Wilbraham; and explain what his philosophy is in terms of how to create a budget as a Town Administrator?*

Mr. Breault explained that he prepares the budget for eight Departments in the Town of East Longmeadow. Additionally, he compiles all the budgets, such as the Police and Fire Departments', under the responsibility of the East Longmeadow Board of Selectmen. He described his indirect role in the budget process for those Departmental budgets. Mr. Breault indicated that he approaches budget development by initially comparing where the Town's budget is and establishing historical, fiscal trends. He added further comment on his budget development processes. Overall, Mr. Breault clarified that his approach is to present a budget at its minimum based on what the Town wants to do. According to Mr. Breault, the difference between the Towns is that in Wilbraham, he would meet with Department Heads during the planning process of the budget. Once the budget was completed, he would then make presentations to the Board of the Selectmen. Mr. Breault did indicate that he would work collaboratively with the Finance Committee during the budgetary process.

Selectman Bunnell asked: *Education and schools are very important to Wilbraham and our regional partner the Town of Hampden. Please describe any previous experience interacting with School Committees and/or Superintendents; and explain how that would translate to our Regional School District's circumstance.*

Mr. Breault admitted that he did not understand the Town Administrator's role in the Town of Wilbraham relative to the Regional School District. He described his role as the Town Administrator in East Longmeadow and how it interacts with the school system, which is not a regional school system. He mentioned that he sits on one of the East Longmeadow School System's taskforce; and he has frequent meetings and interactions with the School Committee and Superintendent of Schools.

As a follow up, Selectman Bunnell asked: *A particular concern in Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School System is the impact of the sharply decline in enrollment, and the challenges presented to expand the regional school system with a middle school. Can you describe your experience that would demonstrate a similar challenge and describe a resolution for us?*

Mr. Breault described a situation, which he was on the periphery, in East Longmeadow. He acknowledged that the situation was opposite in nature than Wilbraham's situation. The circumstance involved an increase in the East Longmeadow student population that prompted the school system to construct module classrooms to accommodate the growing enrollment.

Selectman Boilard asked the following fictitious and situational question: *The Police Chief is the brother of one of the Police Captains. There is a vacancy for a new patrol officer, and the son of the Police Captain, who is the Chief's brother, is an applicant for the position. What are you concerned about? What action would you take?*

Mr. Breault asked if Wilbraham is in the civil service system. Selectman Boilard indicated no. Mr. Breault responded to the question; and stated that the Town would have to be concerned with any conflict of interest with the hiring process in this particularly situation. According to Mr. Breault, the hiring process must be open and transparent. He also pointed out that he would make sure that the Board of Selectmen was aware of the situation.

Chairman Russell informed Mr. Breault that the interview has concluded and thanked him for his participation. He then offered Mr. Breault the opportunity to ask a question or make a last statement.

Mr. Breault inquired what the best method is for the Town Administrator to communicate issues to the Board of Selectmen. Selectman Boilard responded to the question. Chairman Russell emphasized that it is important for the Town Administrator to ensure that the Selectmen are not deliberating in conflict with the Open Meeting Laws. He provided a fabricated example by illustrating an email communication case. Selectman Bunnell added further comment as to how the Selectmen try to maintain availability relative to communication. Mr. Breault thanked the Selectmen, again; and expressed his sentiment relative to looking forward to meeting with the public later in the evening.

Dana Reed

Chairman Russell welcomed Mr. Reed; and informed that the interview was being broadcasted live by the local Public Access. He also apprised that the Selectmen would greet him later today at the Wilbraham Public Library's Brooks Room, at 6:00pm, where he would get to meet the community. Chairman Russell then described the interview process to the

candidate. He then asked Mr. Reed to introduce himself; and explain what skills he has that makes him the best candidate for the Town Administrator position.

Mr. Reed shared that he was born and raised in Ohio. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Parks and Recreation. He became the first County Parks Director in a county in Ohio. He also served as a Parks and Recreation Director in a city in Michigan. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Reed explained, that while serving in the Director's position, he was promoted to fill the vacant city manager's position on an interim base. Mr. Reed described the financial situation in that particularly community and how the budget process worked. Eventually, Mr. Reed applied for the vacant City Manager position when the community advertised for the vacant position. Sometime thereafter, according to Mr. Reed, he transitioned to a Town Administrator position in Bar Harbor, Maine. He served in that position for twenty-seven years. He shared some of his experience as Town Administrator in Bar Harbor as well as information about the Town's population size and geography. When he left his position in Bar Harbor, the Town had a strong financial position and its infrastructure was upgraded. He explained how Bar Harbor's budget was very conservative and included ample reserves for replacing Town equipment. He noted that the Bar Harbor community did not like to borrow to pay for equipment and such. Mr. Reed continued to outline his highpoints as a Town Administrator in Bar Harbor.

Selectman Bunnell asked Mr. Reed the following question: *Similar to many communities, Wilbraham faces the challenge of providing a high level of service to residents within the constraints of taxpayer's appetite for taxes. The state's contribution to our budget is very small, which protects us from some of the vagaries of their process but leaves us on our own for financing the Town's needs. How have you demonstrated effective cost management and balancing the competing needs for service and fiscal restraint?*

Mr. Reed explained the capital improvement plan that was utilized in Bar Harbor, which helped with cost management and suppling the needs for service. He also described the Town's fees and charges procedures, where fees were used to fund and provide services that the community wanted or needed. He expanded on this point. Mr. Reed mentioned that you have to examine the expenses of the Town and make sure that the Town is spending wisely.

Selectman Boilard asked Mr. Reed the following question: *In Wilbraham all operating departments are direct reports to the Administrator. How do you manage, motivate and ensure that Department Heads are fully accountable for the services delivered by their departments.*

Mr. Reed explained that one of the ways he found most successful working with employees, particularly Department Heads, is to have quarterly, one-on-one meetings with the Department Heads to discuss how things are in Town, with the Department and Department Head. At the conclusion of these meetings, according to Mr. Reed, the Department Head and he would lay out goals that needed to be worked on for the next three months. During the next quarterly, one-on-one meeting, the goals developed at the last meeting were reviewed to see how and if the goals were accomplished or not. It was his experience that the Department Heads liked that model.

Chairman Russell asked the following question about a fictitious situation: *You receive a complaint that an employee in the Assessor's Office is upset for being referred to as "Granny" by her co-workers. You discover that there is a common practice of giving nicknames to employees in that department, which seems to be rooted in a habit of assigning such nicknames by the Chair of the Board of Assessors, an elected official. What would you do?*

Mr. Reed described the process he would take to handle the situation. He would first conduct an investigation through conversation to assess what exactly happened. Upon conclusion of the investigation, he then would educate those involved as to what happened so that all could come to an understanding. He provided an example.

Selectman Bunnell asked: *In my 24 years in Wilbraham, I've worked with only two Town Administrators, so our longevity in the position seems well above average. We also enjoy a strong organization, staffed by competent department heads and other professionals. What would your entry plan be to engage with town employees and elected/appointed officials; and how would you describe your management style?*

Mr. Reed described his management style to the Selectmen by providing examples of his experience in Bar Harbor. He explained that he would visit with Department Heads, employees and Town officials to get to know them. According to Mr. Reed, it's important to start off by getting to know the employees and officials. He claimed that he does not come in and make a lot of changes right off the start. He likes to assess the situations first as opposed to potentially creating more problems.

Selectman Boilard asked the following situational and fictitious question: *A resident, who is the mother of a 10 year old girl, who plays soccer in a recreation department league, demands to see you and relays the following story: her daughter tells her that her coach does not like her, that he constantly berates her, belittles her, and makes fun of her soccer playing skills. The mother demands that the coach be fired and that she be reimbursed the registration fee for her daughter. What is your reply to the mother, and what action do you take?*

Mr. Reed explained that he would have to talk to all the parties involved and assess the situation. He clarified his approach is an attempt to solve the problem amongst the parties. He did mention that he would encourage the person with the concern to talk to the Department Head first.

Chairman Russell asked: *Can you describe your philosophy of budget development. What is your thought processes on the development of the budget?*

Mr. Reed pointed out that there is obligation to follow statutory requirements and local traditions on how things are done that needs to be respected. He also emphasized that the budget needs to be clear so that everyone can understand what is in the budget. He claims that his previous Town budgets are quite comprehensive. Mr. Reed explained his approach to the administrative process to create a comprehensive budget. He mentioned that his previous Town budget also included Department Heads' and Selectmen's goals. For this reason, he claimed that it also helps to have an understanding what the Selectmen are looking for in a budget. He provided an example relative to fuel costs. Once the budget is drafted, then he examines what needs to be cut in order to balance the budget. Although during the balancing process he meets with Department Heads to work out the necessary adjustments, he emphasized that he has sole decision-making authority as to what is cut in the budget.

Selectman Bunnell asked: *Education and schools are very important to Wilbraham and our regional partner the Town of Hampden. Please describe any previous experience interacting with School Committees and/or Superintendents and explain how you see that would translate to our Regional School District circumstance.*

Mr. Reed explained that he has an understanding about school assessment, which the Town is obligated to pay. He explained his understanding of the process; and how the municipality does not have input in the development of the school's budget. He further shared his experience in this area of municipal financing and working with a school system.

Selectman Bunnell asked a follow up question: *A particular concern in Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School System is the impact of the sharply decline in enrollment, and the challenges presented to expand the regional school system with a middle school. Can you describe your experience that would demonstrate a similar challenge and describe a resolution for us?*

Mr. Reed responded that he often will follow a variety of issues occurring in other communities to see how things unfold. He mentioned that he followed the progress of this type of issue in another community; and it did not go well.

Selectman Boilard asked the following, fictitious and situational question: *The Police Chief is also the brother of one of the Police Captains. There is a vacancy for a new patrol officer, and the son of the Police Captain who is the Chief's brother, is an applicant for the position. What are you concerned about? What action would you take?*

Mr. Reed responded that he would refer to the Town's personnel policies to see if there was a policy that addresses nepotism. If there isn't a policy in place, he would quickly rectify that issue. He further added that nepotism can create concerns and negative perceptions in the community.

Chairman Russell informed that the interview had concluded; and thanked Mr. Reed for his participation. He offered Mr. Reed the opportunity to ask a question or make a last statement.

Mr. Reed asked the Selectmen what the Board expected the next Town Administrator to accomplish in the first 100 days of employment. Selectman Bunnell informed that considering the timeframe the Town Administrator would have to immediately finish the budget and Town Meeting preparations. She also suggested that the Town Administrator make connections with Department Heads to get an understanding of the Town's operations. She emphasized the importance of obtaining historical knowledge from employees and Town officials in the community as well. Selectman Boilard agreed with Selectman Bunnell that getting to know the key players in Town and an understanding of the Town's operation would be the first task for the new Town Administrator to undertake.

Chairman Russell thanked Mr. Reed again for participating in the interview process.

NEW BUSINESS

School Assessments

Interim Town Administrator Sullivan informed the Selectmen that there is 2.5% increase in the school assessment, which amounts to an increase of \$521,253. He mentioned that he attended a meeting at the schools. At that meeting, it was announced that the School District is showing a \$2,000,000 gap in the school budget because of the Chapter 70 monies that have been level funded. For this reason, the School District is asking for an increase in the contribution amount the Town provides to the School District. Interim Town Administrator Sullivan explained how this would affect the Town financially in the proposed Fiscal Year 2016 budget.

Chairman Russell explained to the audience the budgetary process and how the numbers fluctuate until the State Legislature finalizes the State budget. He also described why the School District is experience a budget shortfall as result of the level funding of Chapter 70 and decrease in Regional School Transportation funds. He added further comment. He explained that a \$2,000,000 short fall for the School District will be a dramatic impact on the school system. He described why. Chairman Russell opened up the discussion to determine what Wilbraham's figure should be for the revised Assessment for the Regional School District.

Selectman Boilard commented about the state's unfunded mandates. He further added that over the past seven years, the State has not reimbursed approximately \$5,000,000 for regional school transportation. As a result, the taxpayers have to make that money up to cover the expense.

Selectman Bunnell thinks it's appropriate to go up to an additional \$400,000, which will still leave the School District at a shortfall, even with Hampden matching assessment monies. She also discussed the possibility of regionalization of the middle school level because of the expense to run the schools. It affects the children's education.

Chairman Russell asked if this increase would affect the Police Station Building Project. Interim Town Administrator Sullivan stated no, the School Assessment increase would not affect the Police Station Building Project.

MOTION: Made (Boilard) and seconded (Bunnell) to insert the figure \$21,770,464 as the Hampden Wilbraham Regional School District School Assessment for the Town of Wilbraham. Approved 3-0.

RECESS

Selectman Boilard announced that the Board of Selectmen was going into recess and resume at the Wilbraham Public Library Brooks Room at 6:00pm.

MOTION: Made (Boilard) and seconded (Bunnell) to recess the Board of Selectmen's General Session Meeting until 6pm, at which time the General Session Meeting will resume at the Wilbraham Public Library, Brooks Room. Approved 3-0.

Wilbraham Public Library, Brooks Room

The Selectmen resumed their meeting at 6:00pm at the Wilbraham Public Library's Brooks Room. Chairman Russell opened the meeting. The Selectmen intermingled with residents, employees and the final Town Administrator candidates until about 6:45pm. At 6:45pm, the Town Administrator candidates each gave a fifteen minute presentation, where they introduced themselves to the community. Dana Reed spoke first, then Edward Gibson and lastly, Nick Breault. There was a brief question and answer session following the presentations.

Having no further business, the Board of Selectmen adjourned at 8:01pm.



Candace Ouillette Gaumond,
Administrative Assistant to the TA/BOS



Robert J. Boilard, Chairman



Susan C. Bunnell, Vice Chairman



Robert W. Russell, Clerk